

REMARKS

Claim 1-25 are pending, of which claims 1 and 15 are independent method claims and claim 21 is an independent computer program product claim generally corresponding to claim 1. The Office Action rejected previously pending claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,724,356 to Parameswaran Nair et al. ("*Nair*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,210,748 to Onishi et al. ("*Onishi*").

Both *Nair* and *Onishi* relate to routers or bridges for connecting networks. In each case, the portions of the references used to reject Applicants' claims involve processing outbound network traffic rather than inbound network traffic. Specifically, *Nair* provides a programmable filter for controlling which network users can access the bridge and for restricting local packet traffic to the LAN. Col. 2, ll. 16-18. Beginning at column 21, line 45, and continuing through column 28, line 10, *Nair* provides a detailed description of the filtering *Nair* performs. Most of the description relates to filtering internal network traffic (i.e., keeping local network traffic from passing over the bridge to a different network). With respect to Figure 24, *Nair* describes the receiving function of the bridge. Col. 26, ll. 42-45. *Nair's* description of the receiving function, however, fails to teach, suggest, or motivate the filtering of inbound network traffic. Rather, all inbound traffic is transferred to the receiving network.

Onishi describes various filter processing embodiments. Among other things, *Onishi* discloses address filtering that can adjust to terminal movement and that can prevent an address table from becoming full without reducing the hit rate for the address table. Col. 1, ll. 62-66. For the first embodiment (discussed beginning at column 4, line 38), *Onishi* explicitly states that the bridging unit does not carry out filtering in the downward direction (i.e., no inbound filtering). Col. 6, ll. 59-66. For the second and fourth embodiments (discussed beginning at column 12, line 68, and column 20, line 52, respectively), *Onishi* explicitly states that in deciding whether to relay or discard a frame, a frame is relayed to all ports if no destination port number is found. Col. 13, ll. 57-58 & col. 22, ll. 5-6; *see also* col. 13, ll. 63-66 (the operation of the routing control section 9113 is the same as that of the above-described first embodiment). (*Onishi's* third embodiment is a storage circuit for use with the other embodiments. Col. 4; ll. 24-26 & col. 16, ll. 10-14.) Accordingly, *Onishi* also fails to teach, suggest, or motivate, and moreover explicitly teaches away from, the filtering of inbound network traffic.

In contrast, each of Applicants' pending independent claims (1, 15, 21), as amended, includes limitations directed to the filtering of incoming data packets. (These limitations are somewhat broader versions of corresponding limitations taken from dependent claims 13, 20, and 22.) As a communication device transmits an outgoing data packet with the network address of the communication device, the network address is added to a list of network addresses for communication devices registered to receive incoming data packets. Then, if the destination address of a received incoming data packet is determined to be in the list of addresses, the incoming data packet is sent to the corresponding communication device. Otherwise, the data packet with the unregistered destination address is filtered. In this manner, communication devices associated with a processing device are automatically recognized so that received data packets can be properly filtered to exclude any data packets for communication devices that are not associated with the processing device.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art does not anticipate or make obvious Applicants' claim invention. Because each of the dependent claims depends from one of these three independent claims, the rejections of record for the dependent claims are moot.

In response to the Examiner's objection to the Declaration, Applicants note that the first page of the Declaration identifies the residence and post office addresses for each inventor. These residence and post office addresses are repeated by the signature of each inventor. Applicants respectfully submit that providing residence and post office addresses in this manner complies with 37 C.F.R. § 1.33(a).

Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that all pending claims are in condition for prompt allowance. In the event that the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 24th day of February, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric M. Kamerath", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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